

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 00139 230600Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0139

JOINT STATE/AID

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: NEW INITIATIVES IN HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: (A) AIDTO CIRC A-687

(B) STATE 298250

(C) GEORGETOWN 0132

SUMMARY: COUNTRY TEAM HAS CONSIDERED REFS (A) AND (B), INCLUDING DISCUSSIONPAPER ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT. WE CONCUR GENERALLY IN THIS POST RECENT INITIATIVE TO BROADEN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EFFORTS BEYOND PREDOMINANTLY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTENT. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING GENRAL SENSITIVITY OF SUBJECT, AND SPECIFIC HYPERSENSITIVITY HERE OF USG INVOLVEMENT, EXTREME CAUTION REQUIRED UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE WILL WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES, BUT PER REF (C) CANNOT RECOMMEND SPECIFIC PROJECT NOW.

1. COMPARED TO MANY COUNTRIES, GUYANA'S RECORD FOR RESPECTING BASIC RIGHTS OF ITS PEOPLE HAS NOT BEEN BAD. DESPITE AN AUTHORITARIAN TREND, THERE IS STILL A CERTAIN REGARD FOR DUE PROCESS SURVIVING FROM GUYANA'S BRITISH HERITAGE. THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS, NO TORTURE, NO SUMMARYEXECUTIONS; OPPOSITION PRESS STILL EXISTS, ALBEIT SUBJECT TO HARASSMENT BY LIBEL SUITS AND DELAYED LICENSES FOR IMPORT OF PAPER AND MACHINERY. THE JUDICIARY HAS NOT BEEN NOTABLE FOR ITS STRENGTH AND INDEPENDENCE, BUT NEITHER IS IT PATENTLY SUBSERVIENT OR CORRUPT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GEORGE 00139 230600Z

2. WE DO NOT SEE THAT USAID OR OTHER FOREIGN ASSISTANCE HERE

HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT EITHER WAY ON CIVIL RIGHTS. THE VARIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS PROVIDED EMPLOYMENT AND DID TEND TO HELP THE BURHAM GOVT STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION AGAINST THE JAGAN-LED MOSCOW-LINE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP). WHETHER THE BURNHAM REGIME WOULD HAVE LOST OUT WITHOUT SUCH SUPPORT IS CONJECTURAL. THE FACT IS THAT HE HAS NOW PRE-EMPTED THE LEFT WITH HIS OWN BRAND OF PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) SOCIALISM. THE PNC NOW OPENLY AVOWS THE OBJECTIVE OF A MORE "DISCIPLINED" MARXIST-LENINIST SOCIETY AS A MENS TOWARD ACCLERATED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THE 1973 ELECTIONS WERE RATHER OBVIOUSLY RIGGED TO PROVIDE A PARLIAMETAR MAJORITY ADEQUATE FOR THOROUGH REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION, NOW CHARACTERIZED AS A "COLONIALIST ANACHRONISM". THE PROPERTY RIGHTS THEREUNDER WERE SUBSTANTIALLY NEGATED BY A RECENT AMENDMENT DEFINING EXPROPRIATION COMPENSATION RELATIVE TO 1939 RATHER THAN CURRENT VALUES, AND FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION PROVIDING FOR A MORE AUTHORITARIAN FORM OF GOVT IS ANTICIPATED FOR 1976.

3. HOW FAR THE GOG WILL GO IN IMPOSING "DISCIPLINE FOR DEVELOPMENT" IS NOT YET CLEAR. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE THAT U.S. BILATERAL AID COULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AMELIORATE THE RESULT OVER THE SHORT TERM. RATHER WE BELIEVE THE GREATER RISK RIGHT NOW IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE TENDENCY TO ASSOCIATE OUR PREEMINENT CAPITALIST COUNTRY WITH THE "CAPITALIST ENEMY" OF MARXIST RHETORIC, ANY USAID ATTEMPT TO ASSIST A PROJECT NOT OBVIOUSLY WITHIN THE TRADITIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC RUBRIC WOULD PUT THE RECIPIENT AGENCY UNDER SUSPICION AND PROVE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ARE ADVISED THAT THE GOG WILL NOT ALLOW A RECENT EFFORT BY THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION IN SUPPORT OF LEGAL AID ACTIVITIES IN GUYANA TO BE RENEWED, AND THAT THE ACTIVITIES THEMSELVES ARE NOW CONSIDERED SUSPECT.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT, WERE THE GOG LESS DISTRUSTFUL OF CAPITALIST INFLUENCE, THERE COULD BE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES IN SUCH AREAS AS LEGAL AID, INFORMAL EDUCATION ON AVAILABLE REMEDIES, AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE PRECEDENTS. WE NOTE THAT THE UK HAS BROUGHT IN JURISTS FOR A FEW DAYS, USIS IS ALSO BRINGING AMERICAN JUDGE IN APRIL AND IN 1975 SENT A GOG JURIST TO THE U.S. FOR A MONTH AND BROUGHT IN MOVIES ON U.S. TRIAL PROCEEDINGS WITHOUT OBJECTION BY THE GOG.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 00139 230600Z

WE WILL KEEP OUR EYES OPEN FOR OTHER POSSIBILITIES. HOWEVER, FOR THE REASONS INDICATED, WE DO NOT SEE THE PRESENT AS THE PROPITIOUS TIME FOR USAID TO TAKE SUCH A NEW INITIATIVE HERE IN GUYANA.

5. ALTERNATIVELY, WE SUGGEST THAT HUMAN RIGHTS MAY BE ANOTHER AREA WHERE GUYANA CAN BEST BE REACHED THROUGH A RETIONAL APPROACH. GUYANA IS A STRONG PROPONENT OF CARIBBEAN REGIONALISO AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN MOST REGIONAL PROGRAMS. GOG BAR ADMISSION RE-

QUIREMENTS NOW STRONGLY FAVOR GRADUATES OF THE UWI LAW SCHOOLS
AT BARBADOS, JAMAICA AND TRINIDAD. ACCORDINGLY WE RECOMMEND THAT
USAID CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES AT THOSE INSTITUTIONS FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS RELATED PROJECTS SUCH AS LEGAL AID, ACCESS TO JURISPRUDENCE.
TO THE EXTENT THAT THERE ARE OTHER CARIBBEAN REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS
AND ORGANIZATIONS OF OR FOR LAWYERS,; '748 5 ,PARLIAMENTARIANS,
ATTORNEY-GENERALS, ETC; THESE ALSO MIGHT OFFER PROJECT POSSIBILITIES.
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